**“Stony the road…” Lesson Plan**

**Global Struggle for Freedom**

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Historical Context: Three men in three different countries fought for and went to jail for the right to be equal citizens. Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Martin Luther King Junior in the United States, and Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya, describe their rationale for fighting against an unfair, white power structure in their respective countries.

**Excerpt from Martin Luther King’s Letter from a Birmingham Jail**

**Document 1**

16 April 1963

My Dear Fellow Clergymen:

While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view which argues against "outsiders coming in." I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. We have some eighty five affiliated organizations across the South, and one of them is the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. Frequently we share staff, educational and financial resources with our affiliates. Several months ago the affiliate here in Birmingham asked us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct action program if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented, and when the hour came we lived up to our promise. So I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here.

But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

*(Taken from* [*http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles\_Gen/Letter\_Birmingham.html*](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html)*)*

* 1. What are King’s reasons for being in Birmingham?
  2. Why does King not consider himself an outsider?

**Excerpt from Martin Luther King’s Letter from a Birmingham Jail**

**Document 2**

You may well ask: "Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word "tension." I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood. The purpose of our direct action program is to create a situation so crisis packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

*(Taken from* [*http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles\_Gen/Letter\_Birmingham.html*](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html)*)*

1. Why does King use non-violent resistance as a strategy for change?

**The famous walk from Selma to Montgomery on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama in March 1965**

**Document 3**



Source: Taken from <http://ccrjustice.org/files/images/Selma-to-Montgomery-March.jpg>.

1. What do you see in this picture?
2. Who is participating in this event?
3. Where is this event taking place?
4. Do you think this is a violent or non-violent picture?

**Alabama state troopers attack civil-rights demonstrators outside Selma, Alabama, on Bloody Sunday, March 7, 1965**

**Document 4**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bloody_Sunday-Alabama_police_attack.jpeg)

*(Taken from* [*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selma\_to\_Montgomery\_marches*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selma_to_Montgomery_marches)*)*

1. What is going on in this picture?
2. Who appears to be the aggressors?
3. What do you think the outcome of this event will be?

**Excerpts from Nelson Mandela’s speech: “I Am the First Accused”**

**The Rivonia Trial, April 20, 1964**

**Document 5**

Having said this, I must deal immediately and at some length with the question of violence. Some of the things so far told to the Court are true and some are untrue. I do not, however, deny that I planned sabotage. I did not plan it in a spirit of recklessness, nor because I have any love of violence. I planned it as a result of a calm and sober assessment of the political situation that had arisen after many years of tyranny, exploitation, and oppression of my people by the Whites.

But the violence which we chose to adopt was not terrorism. We who formed Umkhonto were all members of the African National Congress, and had behind us the ANC tradition of non-violence and negotiation as a means of solving political disputes. We believe that South Africa belongs to all the people who live in it, and not to one group, be it black or white. We did not want an interracial war, and tried to avoid it to the last minute. If the Court is in doubt about this, it will be seen that the whole history of our organization bears out what I have said, and what I will subsequently say, when I describe the tactics which Umkhonto decided to adopt. I want, therefore, to say something about the African National Congress.

We had no doubt that we had to continue the fight. Anything else would have been abject surrender. Our problem was not whether to fight, but was how to continue the fight. We of the ANC had always stood for a non-racial democracy, and we shrank from any action which might drive the races further apart than they already were. But the hard facts were that fifty years of non-violence had brought the African people nothing but more and more repressive legislation, and fewer and fewer rights. It may not be easy for this Court to understand, but it is a fact that for a long time the people had been talking of violence - of the day when they would fight the White man and win back their country - and we, the leaders of the ANC, had nevertheless always prevailed upon them to avoid violence and to pursue peaceful methods. When some of us discussed this in May and June of 1961, it could not be denied that our policy to achieve a non-racial State by non-violence had achieved nothing, and that our followers were beginning to lose confidence in this policy and were developing disturbing ideas of terrorism.

*(Source: African National Congress documents,* [*http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/rivonia.html*](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/rivonia.html)*)*

1. How does Mandela justify his use of violence over what he views as terrorism?

**Student Demonstration in Langa, South Africa 1976**

**Document 6**



(Source: Demonstration in Langa, Cape Town. http://www.overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/image.php?id=276)

1. In support of the student protests in Soweto, South Africa against using textbooks in the oppressors language of Afrikaneers, children in the township of Langa protest as well. Are they following the precepts of violent or nonviolent protest?

**Jomo Kenyatta: Speech at the Kenya African Union Meeting at Nyeri, July 26, 1952**

**Document 7**

True democracy has no colour distinction. It does not choose between black and white. We are here in this tremendous gathering under the K.A.U. flag to find which road leads us from darkness into democracy. In order to find it we Africans must first achieve the right to elect our own representatives. That is surely the first principle of democracy. We are the only race in Kenya which does not elect its own representatives in the Legislature and we are going to set about to rectify this situation. We feel we are dominated by a handful of others who refuse to be just. God said this is our land. Land in which we are to flourish as a people. We are not worried that other races are here with us in our country, but we insist that we are the leaders here, and what we want we insist we get.

Our country today is in a bad state for its land is full of fools-and fools in a country delay the independence of its people. K.A.U. seeks to remedy this situation and I tell you now it despises thieving, robbery and murder for these practices ruin our country. I say this because if one man steals, or two men steal, there are people sitting close by lapping up information, who say the whole tribe is bad because a theft has been committed. Those people are wrecking our chances of advancement. They will prevent us getting freedom. If I have my own way, let me tell you I would butcher the criminal, and there are more criminals than one in more senses than one.

. . . Do not be scared of the few policemen under those trees who are holding their rifles high in the air for you to see. Their job is to seize criminals, and we shall save them a duty today. I will never ask you to be subversive but I ask you to be united, for the day of Independence is the day of complete unity and if we unite completely tomorrow, our independence will come tomorrow. This is the day for you to work bard for your country, it is not words but deeds that count and the deeds I ask for come from your pockets.

(Source:Halsall, Paul. Modern History Sourcebook. <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1952kenyatta-kau1.html>)

1. Does Jomo Kenyatta advocate violent or nonviolent resistance as a means of change?

**Document 8**



*Jomo Kenyatta, leader of the Kenyan independence movement, was convicted by Kenya's British rulers of leading the extremist Mau Mau in their uprising against white settlers and the colonial government.*

Source: The First Post. *The Week* http://www.thefirstpost.co.uk/27428,in-pictures,news-in-pictures,picture-past

1. Kenyatta is on his way to jail for protesting government. What appears to be Kenyatta’s reaction to his imprisonment?

Final essay question:

1. The struggle for civil rights took on many forms. In a well organized essay with an introduction, conclusion, and body paragraphs, compare and contrast various forms of protest.
2. Three different people were discussed in these documents. Write about what they did as individuals.